

A
SERMON
PREACHED before the
KING
AT
White-Hall,

MAY the Seventh, MDCLXXVI.

BY
JOHN SUDBURY, D.D.
And DEAN of *Durham*,
Chaplain in Ordinary to His MAJESTY.

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ON the Seventh, March 1688.

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1 TIM. 3. 15.

—The Pillar and Ground of the Truth.



THE care of all the Churches,
which lay upon St. Paul,
would neither suffer him to
keep a constant residence
upon any one of them, nor
to leave them as Sheep
without a Shepherd to
have that care of them in his absence, which
he himself had when he was present with
them.

And therefore having spent some time at
Ephesus, he departed from thence into Mace-
donia, leaving the care of that Church to Timo-
thy; and wrote this Epistle to him, to let him
know how he ought to behave himself in so
excellent and worthy a Province as that was,
which he had committed to him, as he tells
him in this and the former Verse: *These things
write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly.
But if I tarry long, that thou mayst know how
thou oughtest to behave thy self in the House of*
A 2 God,

God, which is the Church of the living God, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth.

In which words he sets before him the Dignity of that Church, which he had committed to his care, in three excellent Titles; *The House of God*; *The Church of the living God*; *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth*: Every one of which, is very worthy of a distinct and particular Consideration; but this last hath the most need of it, because it hath been very much perplex'd with a great deal of work about it, to make it serve the pride and ambition of a Church, of which there is not so much as any mention throughout the whole Epistle. All the Greatness of the Church of Rome, the Sovereignty of Power and Jurisdiction which it claims over all other Churches, the Infallibility of all her Doctrines, and an Immoveable Station in the Truth, from which it can never fall, are charged upon this Text; but how unreasonably, we shall see in the Examination of these three Particulars.

I. *The Church, which is here called The Pillar and Ground of the Truth.*

II. *The Truth of which this Church is The Pillar and Ground.*

III. *The*

III. The importance of these words, *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth.*

Where it will not be *hard* to make it *clear* and *evident*, that this pretended infallible Oracle of Truth, is very much mistaken in every one of these Particulars; *The Church*; *The Truth*; and, *The Pillar and Ground*.

For the *Church*, of which *St. Paul* speaks in these words, was not the Church of *Rome*. The *Truth* of which he speaks, was not the *Truth* of which the Church of *Rome* takes upon it to be the *Pillar and Ground*. The *Pillar and Ground* in *their* sense is not the sense of *St. Paul*; and in the sense of *St. Paul*, there was not any *Church* in the *World* to which this Honour of being the *Pillar and Ground of the Truth*, was not more due than it is to the present Church of *Rome*.

And first, for the *Church*, nothing can be more *clear* and *evident*, than that the *Church* of which *St. Paul* speaks in these words, was not the Church of *Rome*, but the *Church* of *Ephe- sus*: for *Timothy*, to whom he wrote this *Epi- stle*, was not the *Bishop* of *Rome*, but of *Ephe- sus*. There *St. Paul* left him, when he departed from thence into *Macedonia*; and he left him.

him to *abide there*, and to do the Office of a Bishop *there*, as he tells him at the *beginning* of this *Epistle*. *I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other Doctrine.*

This Church of *Ephesus* is called the *Pillar and Ground of the Truth*, not as it was the *Local Church of Ephesus*, divided from all other Churches, as the *City of Ephesus* was divided from all other Cities: Nor as the *Visible Head* of them all: But as it was one with them all in the *Communion* of that one *Catholick and Apostolick Church*, of which that and all particular Churches were so many *Parts and Members*. Which one *Catholick and Apostolick Church*, was *One*, not by a corporal assembling together in one place, but by an *unanimous profession* of one and the same *Catholick and Apostolick Faith and Doctrine, and Discipline*, which was of more *Power and Vertue* to make them all *one*, than any distance of place, or difference of *Laws, Languages, Customs, Manners*, or any other difference among them, could be to make them *two*. Secondly, *Catholick*, because it was not limited to any Nation, as the Church of the *Israelites* was confin'd to one Family, which

which was the House of *Jacob*; and all their Sacrifices to one place, which was the Temple at *Jerusalem*: but extended to all men every where, without any distinction of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, *Barbarians*, *Scythians*, bond and free, male and female. Thirdly, *Apostolick*, because that one *Catholick* Faith and Doctrine in which they were all join'd together in one, was that which they all had received from the *Apostles*, whose sound was gone out into all the Earth, and Rom. 10. 18. their words unto the ends of the World.

Now as that one *Catholick* and *Apostolick* Church was the Pillar and Ground of the Truth, by their visible profession of that Truth, as we shall see afterwards: So particular Churches, which made a visible profession of the same *Catholick* and *Apostolick* Truth, were one with it, and every one of them might be call'd a Pillar and Ground of the Truth, especially such of them as were the most *eminent* and *conspicuous*; and such was the Church of *Ephesus*. For as the Churches of the *East* were more numerous and conspicuous when *St. Paul* wrote this *Epistle*, than the Churches of the *West*: so the Church of *Ephesus* was of great note and eminence among the Churches of the *East*. It was as eminent a Church for the profession of the Truth of Christian

Act. 19. 10.

Act. 19. 19.
20.

Christian Religion, as the City of *Ephesus* was for Heathenish *Idolatry* and *Superstition*, when it was a Worshipper of the great Goddess *Diana*, and of the Image which fell down from *Jupiter*. The Preaching of the Gospel had such an influence from that City, which was the *Metropolis* of the lesser *Asia*, that all they which dwelt in *Asia* heard the word of the Lord *Jesus*, both *Jews* and *Greeks*. The Men of Learning, who had busied their Wits, and spent much of their time in the study of Curious Arts, were so taken with it, as not only to renounce all further study of those Curious Arts; but to shew their resolution never to return to that Study again, they brought their Books together and burned them before all men; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver: so mightily grew the Word of God, and prevailed. And the Crafts-men of the City, who got their Wealth by making Silver Shrines for *Diana*, were so alarm'd at the success of it, as to perceive that the Temple of the great Goddess *Diana* would be despis'd, and her Magnificence destroyed, whom all *Asia* and the World worshipped. And which troubled them more, their Trade was in great danger to be lost; for that was the first Argument which *Demetrius* us'd to raise them
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up into an uproar, Vers. 25. *Sirs, ye know that by this Craft we have our Wealth.*

The Church of *Ephesus* had this further Honour, not only to be one of the *Seven Churches* which were presented to *St. John*, in the Vision of *Seven Golden Candlesticks*, and *Christ* in the midst of them, commanding him to write so many *Epistles* to them, which he himself dictated to him; but to be the *first of them*; *Revel. 1. 11* and the Character which he gives of that Church, is such as might well become a Church which was a *Pillar and Ground of the Truth*: *I Revel. 1. 5, 6.* *know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: And thou hast tryed them which say they are Apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars; and hast born, and hast patience, and for my Names sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.*

Now if the Church of *Ephesus*, which had all this Honour, had aspir'd to a Supremacy over all other Churches, it might have made a fairer Title to it by *St. Paul*, than that which the Church of *Rome* hath made by *St. Peter*. For *St. Paul* was separated to his Office from his *Mother's Womb*: *Gal. 1. 15.* He was called to it in a singular and extraordinary manner, by *Christ* ap-

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pearing

Acts 9. 3. pearing to him in a Vision from Heaven. He
 Vers. 15. was honour'd by him with this Character, He
 is a chosen Vessel unto me, to bear my Name be-
 fore the Gentiles and Kings, and the Children
 of Israel. He was not a whit behind the very
 chief Apostles. He laboured more abundantly
 than they all. The care of all the Churches lay
 upon him. He strived to preach the Gospel not
 where Christ was named, lest he should build up-
 on another mans foundation. He conferred not
 with flesh and blood, neither went he up to Je-
 rusalem to them that were Apostles before him.
 They who seem'd to be somewhat in conference
 added nothing to him. He was so far from
 learning any thing of St. Peter, and from look-
 ing upon him as his Superiour, that he with-
 stood him to the face; and told him plainly,
 that he, and others whom he had mislead,
 walked not uprightly according to the truth of the
 Gospel. And St. Peter was so far from rebuking
 him for his insolence, as to make an honourable
 mention of him: Our beloved Brother Paul,
 according to the Wisdom given to him.

St. Paul, who was thus highly honour'd,
 had been Preaching the Gospel to the Ephesi-
 ans for the space of three years: But there is
 not so much as any express mention in the
 Scrip-

Scripture that ever St. Peter was at Rome; and we may see they are hard put to prove it, when they cannot alledge any one Text for it but that, *The Church which is at Babylon elect together with you, saluteth you.* 1 Pet. 5. 13.

It was likewise a singular care which St. Paul had of the Church of Ephesus, that in his absence he commended the care of it to Timothy, 1 Tim. 1. 1. a person inear'd to him by many Names; His own Son in the Faith; His beloved Son; His Brother; His Work-fellow: and wrote two Epistles to him, to let him know how he ought to behave himself in so excellent and worthy a Province as that which he calleth *The House of God, the Church of the living God, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth.* Whereas St. Peter never wrote any one Epistle to the Romans, nor do we read of any one whom he left to take care of that Church in his absence, though he was so much absent that it is much doubted whether he were ever there. 2 Tim. 1. 1. Col. 1. 1. Rom. 16. 1.

For all that the ancient Fathers have written of his being Bishop of Antioch seven years, and after that Bishop of Rome twenty and five years, and after that crucified under Nero, is upon the Testimony of Eusebius, of whom Bellarmine saith that he was deceiv'd in some things, and

we are very well assur'd that he was deceived in this: for three years after St. Paul's Conversion, he went up, not to Rome, but to Jerusalem, to see Peter, and there he found him, and abode with him fifteen days. Then fourteen years after he went up again to Jerusalem; and there he found him. He was present at the Council at Jerusalem, as we read *Acts* 15. which was eighteen years after Christ: And in the former Chapters of the *Acts of the Apostles*, we find him there, or thereabouts, a great way from Rome. After that he preach'd the Gospel to those of Pontus, Asia, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Bithynia. And if after all this time he sate Bishop of Antioch seven years, and after that five and twenty years Bishop of Rome, he must outlive Nero more years than Nero Reigned, and therefore he could not be crucified under him.

But as St. Paul, who knew very well that he was not a whit behind the very chief Apostles, did never offer to put himself before and above them all; and among the Apostles there were some who in regard of their Personal Excellencies are called *Chief and Pillars*, yet without any Jurisdiction over the rest: so among Churches, though the Churches of the East were more numerous, and of greater note than those
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of the *West*, they never requir'd any subjection from them ; and among the *Eastern Churches*, though the Church of *Ephesus* was of great note and eminence, it never assumed any Sovereignty over the other Churches. There is no ground in Scripture, nor in the Catholick and Apostolick Church, that will afford any standing for such a Pillar, as that of a Local Church, which is to all other Churches as the *Head* in a Body to all the Members of that Body, as a *Foundation* in a Building to all the Building that stands upon it, as a *Root* in a Tree to all the Branches : For though the Church of *Rome* arrogates to itself all these Titles, together with that of the *Catholick* and *Apostolick Church*, this is so far from being *Catholick* and *Apostolick Truth*, that it is neither *Catholick*, nor *Apostolick*, nor *Truth*.

I. It is not *Catholick* : for though the City of *Rome* had that Dominion over the Kings of the Earth, for which it was called *Caput Orbis*, the Head of the World ; the Church of *Rome* did never claim any such Headship over all other Churches for above three hundred years after *St. Paul* wrote this Epistle : and was so far from denying her Communion to all other Churches, but those which would accept it upon such terms,

terms as those, which *Nabash* the *Ammonite* propos'd to the men of *Jabesh-Gilead*; On this condition will I make a Covenant with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes. Or from saying to them as the *Bramble* in the Parable of *Joatham* said unto the Trees; If in truth ye anoint me King over you, then come, and put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the Bramble, and devour the Cedars of *Lebanon*. That in the sixth Canon of the Council of *Nice*, which in the *Arabick* Canons is the eighth, the Bishop of *Rome* is propos'd as an example to the Bishop of *Alexandria* to contain himself within his own limits.

2. It is not Apostolick; for the Apostles knew nothing of any Superiority and Subjection among themselves, or among the Churches which were founded by them. They knew no other Head of the Church, but Him, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. They knew no other Foundation, but that of Apostles and Prophets; Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. And in that Foundation all the Apostles were as much of the Foundation as any one of them, and therefore are called *Twelve Foundations*, Revel. 21. 14.

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The Church of *Jerusalem* was in some sense the Root of all Churches; *St. Paul* calleth it so, *Rom. 11. 17.* But it never claimed any Superiority over all other Churches upon that account. But as for the Church of *Rome*, he saith plainly in the same Verse, that it was not the Root, but a Branch of a Wild-Olive grafted in among other Branches, and with them partook of the Root and Fatness of the Olive-Tree. And as if he had foreseen how ready that Church would be to boast it self against other Churches, he gives them an Admonition against it, in the next Verse: *Boast not against the Branches: but if thou boast, thou bearest not the Root, but the Root thee.* And argues the matter with them in the next Verse: *Thou wilt say then, the Branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well, because of Unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by Faith: be not high-minded, but fear; for if God spared not the Natural Branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.* And sets before them the example of Gods Severity against the Natural Branches, as a warning to them not to be high-minded, but fear, at the next Verse: *Behold therefore the Goodness and Severity of God: on them which fell, Severity; but towards thee, Good-*

Goodness, if thou continue in his Goodness, otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

3. As it is not *Catholick* nor *Apostolick*, so it is so far from *Truth*, that there never was a more Fundamental Errour, than that of a Local Church, which is such a *Pillar and Ground of Truth*, that it cannot err. But if in the Epistle to the *Romans* there is no mention of such a *Pillar and Ground of Truth*; and in this Epistle to *Timothy*, where these words are found, there is not any mention of the Church of *Rome*, I need not say any more to shew how much they are out in the first Particular, which is the *Church*. Let us proceed to the second Particular, which is the *Truth*; and see if they be not as much out in the *Truth*, as they are in the *Church*.

1. The *Truth* of which the Church is the *Pillar and Ground*, is not all *Truth*: For there are many *Truths* for which the Church is not concern'd; they may stand or fall according to the strength or weakness of those Arguments by which they are supported, or with which they are assaulted, without any peril or prejudice to the *Church*. God who would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the *Truth*, hath set up a *Church* to lead men

to the knowledge of all that *Truth* which is necessary for them, that they may be saved: but as for many other Truths, which are profess'd and taught in Schools and Universities; as all men are not born to be bred up in them, so the knowledge of them is not so necessary to them, but that they may be saved without it. When Christ promis'd his Disciples that he would send them *the Spirit of Truth, to guide them in* Joh. 16. 13. *to all Truth*, He spake of that Truth which was necessary for them to know, for the discharging of that Office and Ministry which he had committed to them, not all other Truth. And therefore when the *Manichees* gloried in him who was the Patriarch of their Sect, that he was a man full of the Holy Ghost, and led in to all Truth, for that he could discourse of Truths in Astronomy, and other Mathematical Sciences; St. *Austin* answer'd them very well, That this was no Argument to prove that he was full of the Holy Ghost: for the Holy Ghost was not given to lead men into such Truths; for he was not given to make Mathematicians, but Christians. And though it is true that the *Infallible Chair* doth not in these days meddle with Truths of this nature, there was a time when it did; but so unluckily, as to condemn

one *Virgilius* for holding that there were *Antipodes*, and that the Earth is round, and the Sun, and Moon, and Stars, move about it in the other Hemisphere, as they do in this; which is a demonstrable Truth.

But to let this pass, as it is not all Truth, so neither is it all Theological Truth, or Truth in Divinity: for Divinity is a Science, in which there are some Truths which dwell in that Light which is so inaccessible, that the most learned men are not ashamed to confess that such knowledge is too wonderful for them, and that they cannot attain unto it. And there be many other Truths about which learned men may differ in opinion, and dispute with so much probability on either side, that though the Truth cannot be with both of them, because what the one affirms, the other denieth; yet they who are in the Error may be persuaded that the Truth is with them, and their Error shall not prejudice their Salvation, unless they suffer themselves to be led into it by some prejudice or passion, or be so obstinate in it as to shew that they seek not Truth, but Victory; and would rather persist in an Error, than by suffering themselves to be led out of it, seem to acknowledge that they were in an Error. The Scriptures, which
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are able to make all men wise unto Salvation, are not so clear and evident in all things, but that we may say of other Books of Scripture, as St. Peter saith of the Epistles of St. Paul, *There are some things in them hard to be understood:* But the more hard they are to be understood, the less necessary they are to be known. God, who hath made the Fruits of the Earth, which are necessary for the food and sustenance of men, to grow upon the face of it, where every eye may see them, and every hand may gather them; but hid the Mines of Gold and Silver, which serve for Riches and Ornament, in the Bowels of the Earth, where they cannot be found but with much seeking, nor be wrought out, and purged from that Dross with which they are mixt, but with great labour, hath likewise made all that Truth which is necessary to feed the Souls of men to Eternal Life, so easie to be found, that we may say of that, as the *Wise-man* saith of Wisdom, *Wisdom is easily* Wisd. 6. 22. *seen of them that love her, and found of such as seek her.* But there be many other Truths which serve to enrich and adorn the Soul, which he hath reserv'd to exercise and reward the labour and study of them that seek for them as for Silver, and as for hidden Treasures. If there

were an Infallible Oracle to determine all Truths, the easiness of coming to the knowledge of them would much abate and lessen the value and esteem of them : but when the difficulty of finding them excites desire, and desire stirs up labour and study, and labour and study find that Truth which could not be found without it, it is the more joyfully embrac'd, and more stedfastly retain'd.

But, Thirdly, The Truth of which the Church is the Pillar and Ground, is *that Truth* which is no where to be found but in the Church ; but is so manifest in the profession of the Church, that they who cannot find it any where else, may find it there. For as in all Sciences there are some Truths which are proper and peculiar to them, as Truths in Logick, Truths in Natural and Moral Philosophy, Truths in all Mathematical Sciences : so there are some Truths in Divinity which are proper and peculiar to it, which as they could never have been known but by Divine Revelation, so they have been made known to the Apostles by the Spirit of Truth, which was given to them to guide them into all Truth, and by the Apostles to the Church. Such is that which St. Paul calleth, *The Truth of the Gospel*, Col. 1. 5. *The Truth of Christ*, 2 Cor.

2 Cor. 11. 10. *The Truth of God*, Rom. 15. 8. And many times it is called *Truth*, and the *Truth*, without any note of difference from all other *Truth*. *Truth*, in opposition to the Religion of the *Heathen* as *Truth*, is oppos'd to *Falschood* and *Lyes*: *Truth*, in opposition to the Religion of the *Jews* as *Truth*, is oppos'd to *Figures* and *Shadows*: *Truth*, in opposition to all other *Truth*, not as contrary to it; for one *Truth* cannot be contrary to another, but in a superlative sense the most excellent and most incomparable *Truth*. For though all *Truth* is *Truth*, yet as *St. Paul* saith of the *Law* and the *Gospel* compar'd together, *Even that which* 2 Cor. 13. 10] *was made glorious had no glory by reason of the glory that excelleth*: So we may say of *Truths* in *Philosophy* and all *Sciences*, compar'd with the *Truth* of the *Gospel*, That which is *Truth* is not *Truth* in comparison of the *Truth* that excelleth. Such is the *Truth* of which the *Apostle* speaks in the next words to these of the *Text*, which some have joyn'd together, expounding these words by them: *Without controversie great is the Mystery of Godliness: God was manifest in the Flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the World, received in Glory.*
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Tit. 1. 1, &c. The Truth which he calleth the Truth which is after Godliness in hope of Eternal Life, which God that cannot lye promised before the World began, but hath in due time manifested his Word through Preaching. The Truth by which we are begotten again, *Jam. 1. 18.* Of his own Will begat he us again by the Word of Truth. The Truth that maketh us Free-men, *Job. 8. 32.* Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free. The sanctifying Truth, *Job. 17. 17.* Sanctifie them with thy Truth, thy Word is Truth. The saving Truth, *1 Tim. 2. 4.* God would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the Truth. And this is the Truth of which the Church is the Pillar and Ground in the sense of St. Paul. Now what sense that is, follows in my third and last Particular, which is the importance of these words, *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth.*

Here are two words, the Pillar and Ground, but they are very well joyn'd together, for they signifie two things which are joyn'd together in a Pillar that standeth firm and stedfast. The former word signifieth that which we call the Body of the Pillar; the latter word signifieth the Basis, or Foundation, or Foot of the Pillar: both together signifie a Pillar standing upon a Basis

Basis or Foundation. But the *Pillar and Ground of Truth*, is a *Metaphorical Expression*, and *Metaphors* are apt to beget *Mistakes*: for in every *Metaphor* there is something which is *like*, and something which is *not like*; and as when the *Metaphor* is taken from something wherein there is a *likeness*, the *Metaphorical Expression* makes the sense more *elegant* and *clear*; but when it is *stretched* to something wherein there is *no likeness*, in stead of making the sense more *clear*, it makes *non-sense*. As in this *Metaphor of the Pillar and Ground of Truth*: A *Pillar*, or rather *many Pillars*, upon which a *House* or *Church* is built, (as the *Temple of Jerusalem* was built upon many *Pillars*, and so was the *Temple of Diana at Ephesus*) the *Pillars* are as the *Foundation* upon which the *House* or *Church* is built, as the *Foot* of the *Pillar* is to the *Pillar* which stands upon it. But in this sense neither the *Church of Ephesus*, nor the *Church of Rome*, nor any *National Church*, nor the whole *Catholick and Apostolick Church*, could be well and truly called *The Pillar and Ground of Truth*; because the *Truth* is not built upon the *Church*, but the *Church* upon the *Truth*. And as there could never have been a *True Church*, if the *Truth of the Church* had not been.

been *before* the Church: so if the *Truth* be removed from the Church, it is no longer a True Church. There is no Power or Authority in *any Church*, to make any thing a *Truth* which was not a *Truth before*. The Apostles delivered the *whole Faith* to the Church; and if all the Churches in the World should joyn together, they cannot make *one new Article* of Faith: All that they can do, is to *deliver* what they have *receiv'd* from them who have delivered what *they also received*, till we come at last to the *Apostles*, who delivered what *they also receiv'd* from the *Spirit of Truth*, by which they were led into all that *Truth*, which could not otherwise be made known to them, and assisted in delivering those *Truths* which were by other *infallible proofs* made known to them.

But beside those many Pillars upon which Houses and Churches were built, there were *single Pillars* erected by the *Heathen*, to such purposes, as do serve very well to express the sense of *this Metaphor*, which the Apostle here useth by way of *allusion* to them.

As first, There were Pillars which they rear'd up on high with Images of their *Gods and Goddesses* upon them, sitting or standing, or in some other posture to attract the eyes of men to look up

up to them with that *Respect* and *Veneration* which is due to *Divine* things. Of such Pillars we read *Lev. 26. 1. Ye shall make you no Idols, nor Graven Image, neither rear you up a standing Image or Pillar, as it is in the Margin.* Now as *St. Paul* saith of the *Heathen*, that they *changed* Rom. 1. 25. the *Truth of God into a Lye*; and the Prophet *Habakkuk* calleth an *Idol a Teacher of Lyes*: So Haba. 1. 18. we may say of those Pillars of Idols, they were Pillars of *Lyes*. And in allusion to them the Church, which sets up the *true* Worship of the true God, above all the *false* Worship of all false gods, to draw the eyes of all men to look up to it with that *Veneration* which is due to it, may be called the Pillar and Ground of Truth, *Excelsa Columna*, according to that which the Prophet *Isaiab* foretold of it in another Metaphor, *Isai. 2. 2. It shall come to pass in the last days, that the Mountain of the Lords House shall be established in the top of the Mountains, and shall be exalted above the Hills; and all Nations shall flow unto it.* But in this sense the Church of *Rome* is more like to those Pillars of the *Heathen*, than any other Christian Church. For though it doth not set up those *Idols* and *Images* of the *Heathen* to be worshipped; it sets up *Images* and *Creatures* to be worshipped, which

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are either *made Idols*, or are in so much *danger* to be made *Idols*, that by the Confession of *Bellarmino*, they that worship God in an Image, or in a Creature, expose themselves to great peril, and are forced to use the most subtil distinctions, which *learned men* do not understand, much less the *ignorant and unlearned*.

Secondly, We read of many *Pillars* erected by the *Heathen*, with *Inscriptions* upon them; *Inscriptions* of *Historical Narrations*, of which it may be some were *true*, and some were *fabulous*; and many other *Inscriptions* of *Laws*, *Leagues*, *Covenants*, *Precepts*, *Decrees*, *Mysteries*, &c. in which sense the Metaphor of a *Pillar* is used, *Revel. 3. 12.* *Him that overcometh will I make a Pillar in the Temple of my God, and I will write upon him the Name of my God, and the Name of the City of my God, which is the New Jerusalem which cometh down out of Heaven from my God; and I will write upon him my new Name.* In this sense the *Catholick* and *Apostolick Church* which exposeth the *Scriptures*, which *Irenaeus* calleth the *Pillar* and *Ground* of the *Faith* of the *Church*, and in which are written the *Oracles of God*, his *Laws*, *Covenants*, *Decrees*, *Mysteries* of his *Will*, *Histories* of his *Providence*, and many other *Di-*
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wine Truths, to be as legible as *Inscriptions* upon a Pillar; and every particular Church, which makes a visible profession of all that Truth which it hath receiv'd from the *Apostles*, and the whole *Catholick* and *Apostolick* Church, so far forth as it is one with that *Catholick* and *Apostolick* Church, is a Pillar and Ground of the Truth, *Inscripta Columna*, a Pillar bearing those *Inscriptions* upon it, in such Characters as make them legible to all men. But in this sense the Church of *Rome* cannot so well be called a Pillar and Ground of the Truth, as other Churches.

1. Because other Churches, *Hebrew*, *Greek*, *Persian*, *Syrian*, *Arabian*, *Ethiopian*, have expos'd the *Scriptures* to be read in their *Vulgar Tongue*: But the Church of *Rome* doth not expose the *Scriptures* to be read but in a Language which the greatest part of them that are concern'd to know the Truths which are reveal'd in them, do not understand; by which means they have kept the people in so great ignorance of the *Scriptures*, that at the beginning of the Reformation many of them knew so little of the *New Testament*, as to believe that it was a Book which had been written by *Luther*.

2. Because they set up unwritten Traditions, of which it may be some are true, and

some are fabulous, and make them all of equal Authority with the *Scriptures*.

3. Because they make the Authority of the *Scriptures* so dependant upon their own Authority, that without it, they are of no more Authority than *Esops Fables*, as some of them have said, and others of them commend the saying.

4. Because though they hold the Foundation, they have built upon that Foundation such things as *St. Paul* calleth *Wood, Hay and Stubble*, and would make the World believe that they are *Gold, Silver, Precious Stones*; which is not the part of a Pillar and Ground of Truth.

1 Cor. 3. 12.

But, Thirdly, The *Pillar and Ground* of Truth as it is in the Text, that is a Pillar set upon a Basis or Foundation, which keeps it firm and steadfast, is a very good expression of such a profession of the *Truth* as is without *wavering*. In which sense *St. Basil* calleth *Abraham* a *Pillar* of Faith, because when he was tempted with a great temptation, He staggered not through *Unbelief*, but was strong in the Faith. And in an Epistle written by the Churches of *Vienna* and *Lyons*, mentioned by *Eusebins*; the *Martyrs*, who suffer'd a great Persecution for their Faith, and were not shak-

Rom. 4. 20.

ken.

ken in it, are called *Pillars*; and *Atlas*, one of great note among them, is called a *Pillar and Ground of the Church*. And in this sense the *Catholick and Apostolick Church* may well be called the *Pillar and Ground of the Truth*; *Immota Columna*, a *Pillar* that stood unmoved upon that *Ground* on which it was set. For though some *Local Churches*, which were but as so many *Candlesticks*, though they were of *Gold*, have been removed; the *Catholick and Apostolick Church* was so well settled upon a *sure and strong Foundation*, that all the means which have been used to overthrow it, have served to establish it.

Great Endeavours were used at first to prevent the setting up of this *Pillar* upon the *Ground* of it, by them whom the Scripture calleth the *Builders*: but the *Destruction* which they thought to bring upon the *Pillar* and the *Ground*, fell upon themselves; and the *Destruction* which fell upon themselves, serv'd very much to the *Edification* of that *Pillar* and *Ground of Truth*, which they sought to destroy.

No sooner was the *Pillar* set up upon the *Ground*, but great Force and Violence was used to throw it down. The *Kings* of the *Earth* were assembled, and the *Princes* took counsel

counsel together against it, as the *Children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem, Down with it, down with it even to the ground.* But all the Force and Violence which they used to overthrow it, serv'd to let them see that it was so well settled upon a sure and strong Foundation, that it could not be overthrown. And as all the *Pillars of Heathenish Idolatry and Superstition*, which were so many *Pillars of Lyes*, fell before it like *Dagon* before the *Ark of God*; so that we may say of them as the Angel said of *Babylon, Babylon is fallen, is fallen*, So we may say of this *Pillar and Ground of Truth*, as Christ saith of the House built upon a Rock, *The Rain descended, and the Floods came, and the Winds blew, and beat upon it, and it fell not; for it was founded upon a Rock.*

Revel. 18. 2.

Matth. 7. 25.

2 Pet. 2. 1.

There have been from the beginning such as St. Peter calls *False Prophets, who have privily brought in damnable Heresies, denying the Lord that bought them, and have brought upon themselves swift destruction.* But that swift destruction which they have brought upon themselves, hath served to the Edification of the Church in that Truth which they sought to destroy.

But this *Pillar and Ground of Truth* was never in so much danger to be thrown down by all

all the force and violence which *Jews* and *Heathens* have rais'd against it; nor to be *undermined* by all the *Heresies* which *False Prophets* and *False Apostles* have devised, as the *Truth* of it hath been to be *perverted* by that Church, which hath endeavoured *defendendo concutere*, to shake this Pillar and Ground by seeming to defend it. For though it hath not removed the Pillar from the *Ground*, but is so far *Catholick* and *Apostolick*, as to hold the *Foundation* of which *St. Paul* saith, *Other Foundation can no man lay, save that which is laid, Jesus Christ*; they have done great *wrong* to the *Truth*, by defacing the *ancient Inscriptions* which were first written upon this Pillar, with such *Alterations* and *Additions* as they have made. But all these *Alterations* and *Additions* have served to raise up many *learned men*, and not a few of them of this *Church of England*, to revive those *ancient Inscriptions*, and make many *Truths*, which are good and profitable, to be known more *legible* than they were before. 1 Cor. 3. 11.

St. Paul speaks of a time that should come, 1 Tim. 4. 3. when men would not endure sound *Doctrine*, but according to their own *lusts* they would heap up to themselves *Teachers*, having *itching ears*. But as he saith in another place, 1 Cor. 11. 13. There must be *Heresies*,
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sies, that they which are approved may be made manifest: So we may say of these itching ears, and the confused multitude of Teachers, which they have heaped to themselves, They have serv'd to make them that are approved for holding fast the form of sound words, and Doctrine, which they have received from the Apostles, and Apostolick Church, the more manifest.

Some Profane Wits have pleas'd themselves in making *Pasquins*, and clapping them upon this Pillar; but they could never make them stick so fast, but that they have fallen to the ground, and been trodden under feet of men. But the Pillar and Ground of Truth can never fall: The Ground on which it stands is the *Rock*, against which the Gates of Hell shall not prevail: The Faith by which it stands is the Belief of a Kingdom which cannot be moved: The Doctrine which is built upon this Faith is Sound Doctrine; and as there have been, so there will be so many holding the profession of this Faith and Doctrine without wavering, as will keep up this Pillar and Ground of Truth so long as the Pillars of Heaven and Earth shall stand; and till He who is the Author and Finisher of our Faith, bring us to the end of our Faith, which is the Salvation of our Souls.

F I N I S.

A
SERMON
PREACHED at the
General Meeting
OF
Gloucestershire-MEN;
For the most part
INHABITANTS
OF THE
City of London:

In the Church of St. Mary Le-Bow,
December the 9th. 1684.

By *Edward Fowler* D. D.

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